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A solution to the Negro problem demands difficult and heroic decisions on the part of civic and political leaders and changes in the behavior of Americans from every walk of life: teachers and students, trade-union leaders and members, and employers and employees. Current action being taken and future actions which need to be taken are discussed. The shame of slavery, the visual differences in race, and the lack of education and training in new technologically demanding times have made the problems of the Negro difficult and self-perpetuating.

Too many Negroes are unable or unwilling to compete in an integrated society. Charitable and social-welfare programs organized, staffed, and supported by Negroes are likely to have a much greater impact on Negro behavior than programs administered by government or by private white agencies, both of which tend to be viewed with suspicion and hostility.

To penetrate the environmental and cultural curtain that keeps the Negro child from learning, the school should take on a comprehensive set of functions that lie outside its normal sphere. The Negro child needs the same kind of education the white child needs -- an education that gives him the intellectual discipline and depth of understanding that will enable him to meet new conditions as they arise. A new pride in self should be developed to help raise Negro aspirations and achievements.

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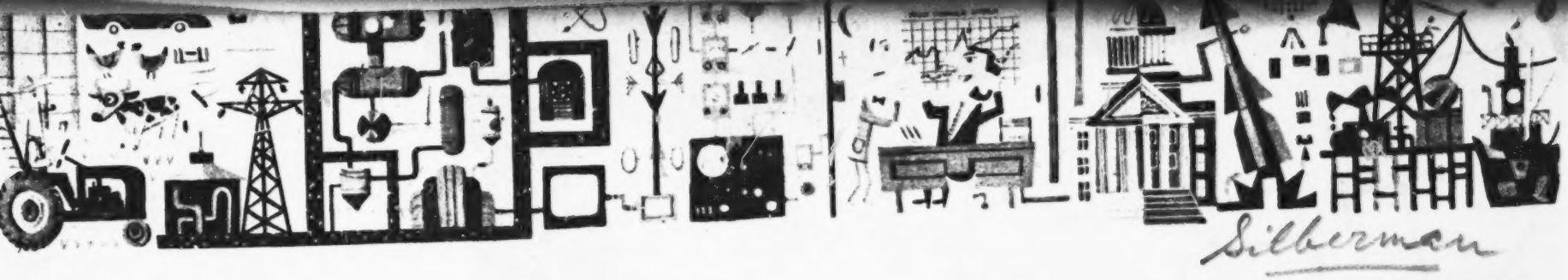

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The City and the Negro

by Charles E. Silberman

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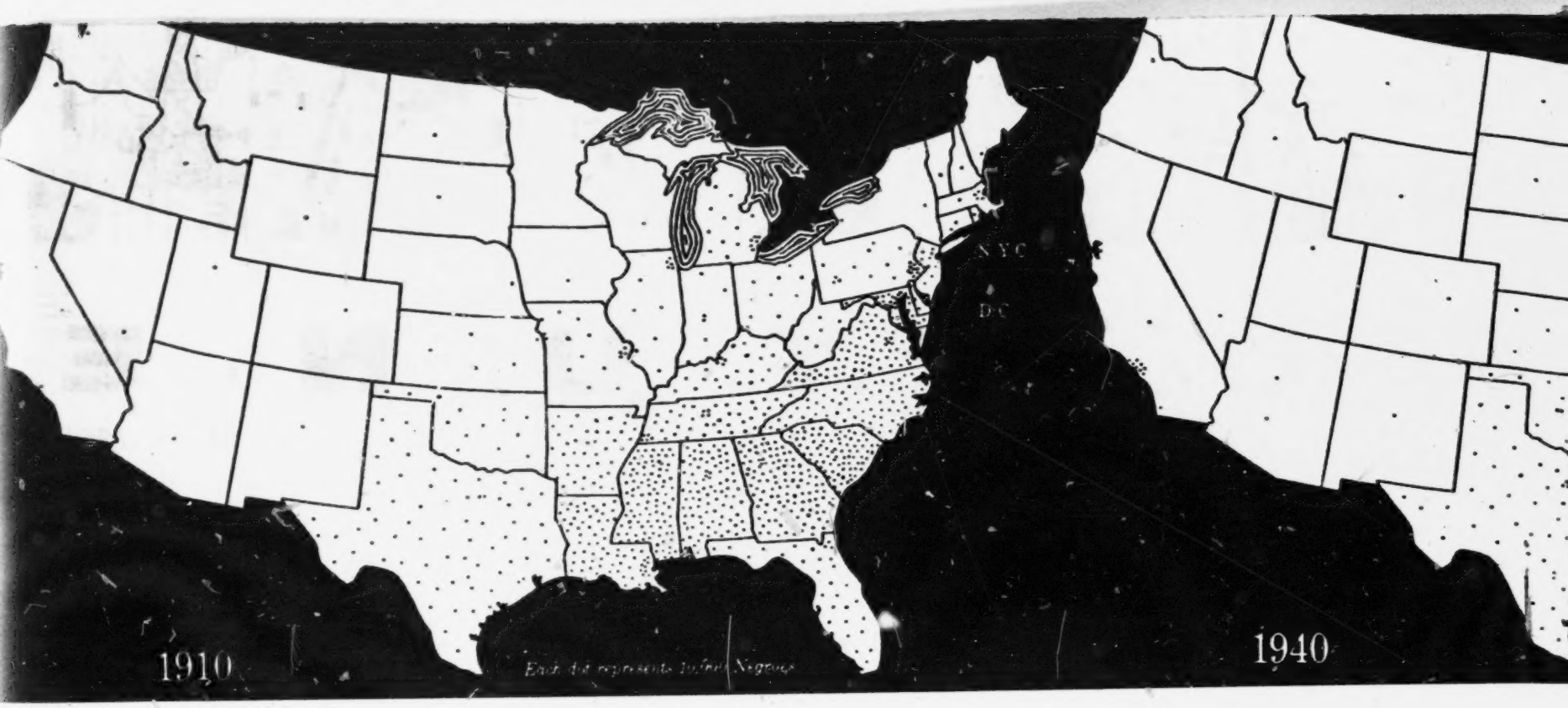


The Negro Migration from South to North and from Country to City

One of the great population changes in modern history is depicted in the maps above, which show the Negro population of the U.S. by state and city of residence. Each dot represents 10,000 Negroes; major city concentrations are shown by clusters of dots. (A single dot is used in states like Nevada, which have fewer than 10,000 Negroes.)

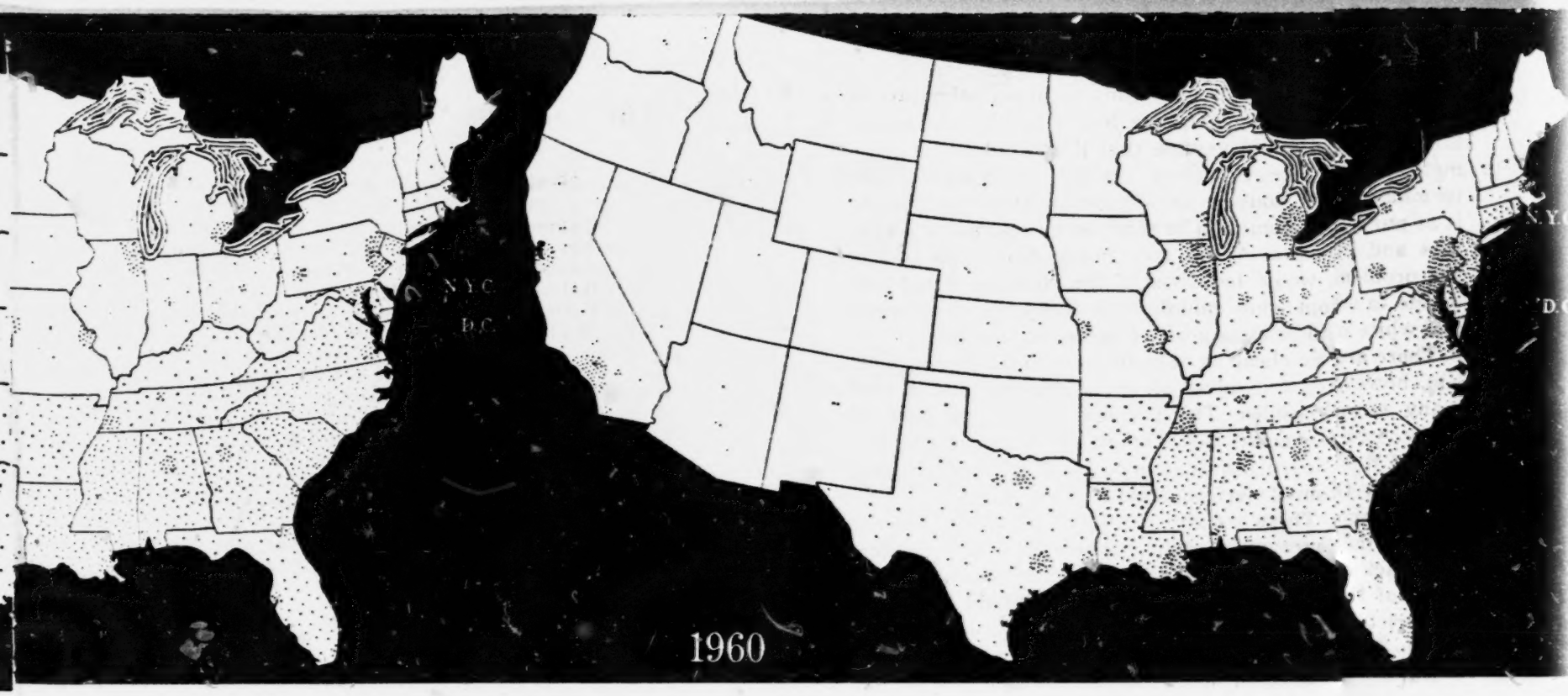
As the maps reveal, Negroes are involved in two shifts: from South to North, and from country to city. Half a century ago, in 1910, eight out of ten U.S. Negroes resided in one or another of the eleven states of the Old Confederacy. Over 90 per cent of these Negroes, moreover, lived in rural areas. Negroes began moving to the North during World War I and continued to move during the 1920's, when restrictive legislation slowed down the flow of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. By 1940 the Negro population in the Old Confederacy had increased only 12 per cent, whereas in the same period the Negro population elsewhere in the U.S. had more than doubled, from 1,900,000 to four million. But the Old Confederacy still contained more than two-thirds of all U.S. Negroes.

The Negro migrations got under way again during World War II, and have continued since then. Between 1940 and 1960 the Negro population outside the Old Confederacy increased two and one-quarter times, going from nearly four million to over nine million—48 per cent of the total U.S. Negro population. In the eleven states of the Old Confederacy, by contrast, Negro population grew a scant 9 per cent. Most of the increase outside the South occurred in the central cities of the twelve largest U.S. metropolitan areas—New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Francisco-Oakland, Boston, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Washington, Cleveland, Baltimore—which now hold 31 per cent of all U.S. Negroes. In the last decade, however, Negro migration has diffused somewhat from big to smaller cities, such as Buffalo, Rochester, Newark, New Haven, Fort Wayne, San Diego.

Within the Old Confederacy, meanwhile, Negro population was shifting from country to city. The number of Negroes declined in the rural areas, as the proportion living in cities jumped from 21 per cent in 1940 (and 7 per cent in 1910) to 41 per cent in 1960. The Negro population of Dallas and Houston, for example, went up two and a half times, and rose 75 per cent in Atlanta and Miami.

"The approved way to talk about cities these days," Paul Ylvisaker of the Ford Foundation has observed, "is to speak solemnly, sadly, ominously, and fearfully about their problems. You don't rate as an expert on the city unless you foresee its doom." Doom is easy to foresee in the spreading slums, the increasing crime rates, the public disaffection of almost every large city. And yet the city can survive, as it has survived for a century and a half. Indeed, American cities today have a chance to achieve their greatest success and their greatest glory.

For this to happen, however, city planners and civic leaders will have to understand better than they now do what their cities' greatest problem is. It is not, as so many assume, to bring the wandering middle class back from the suburbs. The large city, as Jane Jacobs of *Architectural Forum* has put it, cannot import a middle class; it must manufacture its own. And, indeed, most of the huge middle class that dominates American life today was manufactured in the big-city slums of yesteryear. Cities always have had to create their own stable, cultivated citizenry out of whatever raw material lay at hand. For the American city during the past hundred and fifty years, the raw material was the stream of immigrants pouring in from Britain, Ireland, Germany, Norway, Russia, Italy, and a dozen other lands. The city needed these immigrants to build its streets and offices, to man its factories, service its homes and hotels and restaurants,



The City and the Negro

by Charles E. Silberman

and do all the dirty and menial jobs that older residents disdained. But the city did more than use its newcomers; it equipped them to take their place as fully participating members of U.S. society. Doing this—bringing people from society's backwaters into the mainstream of American life—has always been the principal business, and the principal glory, of the American city.

It isn't any longer; the city is in trouble today because it isn't dealing successfully with its newcomers. They are still pouring in—not from County Cork, or Bavaria, or Sicily, or Galicia, but from Jackson, Mississippi, and Memphis, Tennessee, and a host of towns and hamlets with names like Sunflower, Rolling Fork, and Dyersburg. The new immigrants are distinguished from the older residents not by religion or national origin, but by color. Between 1950 and 1960 the twelve largest U.S. cities lost over two million white residents; they gained nearly two million Negro residents.

It is the explosive growth of their Negro populations, in fact, that constitutes the large cities' principal problem and concern. When city officials talk about spreading slums, they are talking in the main about physical deterioration of the areas inhabited by Negroes. And when they talk about juvenile delinquency, or the burden of welfare payments, or any of a long list of city problems, officials are talking principally about the problems of Negro adjustment to city life. For the large city is not absorbing and "urbanizing" its new Negro residents rapidly enough; its slums are no longer acting as the incubator of a new middle class.

One reason for this failure is that city planners have been more interested in upgrading the value of the city's real estate than in upgrading the lives of the human beings who inhabit the real estate. They have tried to create middle-class neighborhoods by driving lower-class Negro residents out of the neighborhood being renewed, and bringing white middle-class residents in; Negroes bitterly refer to urban renewal as "Negro removal." (An estimated 80 per cent of the families relocated by urban-renewal projects have been Negro.) The effort is doomed to failure. Driving the Negroes out of one area merely creates a new and frequently worse slum somewhere else in the city.

The city can be saved only if it faces up to the fact that "the urban problem" is in large measure a Negro problem. But the Negro problem is more than just an urban problem; it is also the problem of all the U.S., rural or urban, North or South—though it is in the large northern cities that the solution is most likely. Speeding the Negro's integration into American life—helping the big-city Negroes move up into the great American middle class—is the largest and most urgent piece of public business facing the U.S. today.

It is also the most difficult. There is a tendency among

many well-intentioned Americans to underestimate this difficulty. Some people see the Negro problem as purely legal and social and assume that it will be solved automatically by desegregating schools, restaurants, bus terminals, and housing developments. Other people see it as purely economic, to be resolved by upgrading Negro jobs and incomes. And a good many Americans believe the problem would be solved if the Negroes would just decide to adopt white middle-class standards of behavior and white middle-class goals of economic success.

There are no cheap or easy answers to the Negro problem, however; it involves all these elements and a good many more besides. The problem's roots go back to slavery, whose impact is still being felt in the disorganization of the Negro family, and to the Negro's systematic exclusion from American society since slavery ended a century ago. These are sins for which all Americans are in some measure guilty and for which all Americans owe some act of atonement. Those who hesitate to act because of the magnitude of the problem should remember the stricture of Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

But the triumph of "good" in this instance (as in most others) requires a lot more than good will. To solve the Negro problem will demand difficult and occasionally heroic decisions on the part of civic and political leaders, and changes in the behavior of Americans in every walk of life: teachers and students; trade-union leaders and members; employers and employees. This article—the sixth in FORTUNE's series on "The Public Business"—will document what is being done across the country, and what needs to be done, to speed the Negro's advance and thereby save the large city.

Filling the vacuum

The Negro has come to the big city because it needed his labor, especially after the cutting off of European immigration created a vacuum in northern labor markets. The Negro population outside the Deep South has increased fivefold since 1910; it has nearly tripled just since 1940. (See maps, pages 2 and 3.) Part of this expansion, of course, has come from natural increase rather than migration; but it is the migration of Negroes in the childbearing ages that enabled the natural increase to occur outside the South.

Most of the Negroes moving to the North have crowded into the slums of the twelve largest cities, which today hold 60 per cent of the Negroes living outside the Deep South. Since 1940 the Negro population of New York City has increased nearly two and one-half times, to 1,100,000, or 14 per cent of the city's population. In Philadelphia, Negroes have doubled in number since 1940, to 529,000, or 26 per cent. The Negro population of Detroit has more than tripled, to nearly 500,000, or 29 per cent of the city's population. And the Negro population of Los Angeles County has jumped a phenomenal sixfold since 1940, from 75,000 to 464,000.

The Negroes, to be sure, are not the only disadvantaged peoples coming into the large cities. In New York the Puerto Rican population swelled from perhaps 100,000 in 1940 to over 700,000 in 1960. And Cincinnati, Baltimore, St. Louis, Columbus, Detroit, and Chicago, among others, receive a steady stream of impoverished white hillbillies from the southern Appalachian Mountains. These Appalachian whites—of the oldest and purest U.S. stock—have at least as much initial difficulty adjusting to the city as do the Negroes and Puerto Ricans. But the Puerto Ricans and Appalachian whites affect only a limited number of cities, usually in only a limited way. There are a good many other city problems besides the Negro problem, in short. But the Negro problem is what city planners and officials are really talking about when they refer to The City Problem.

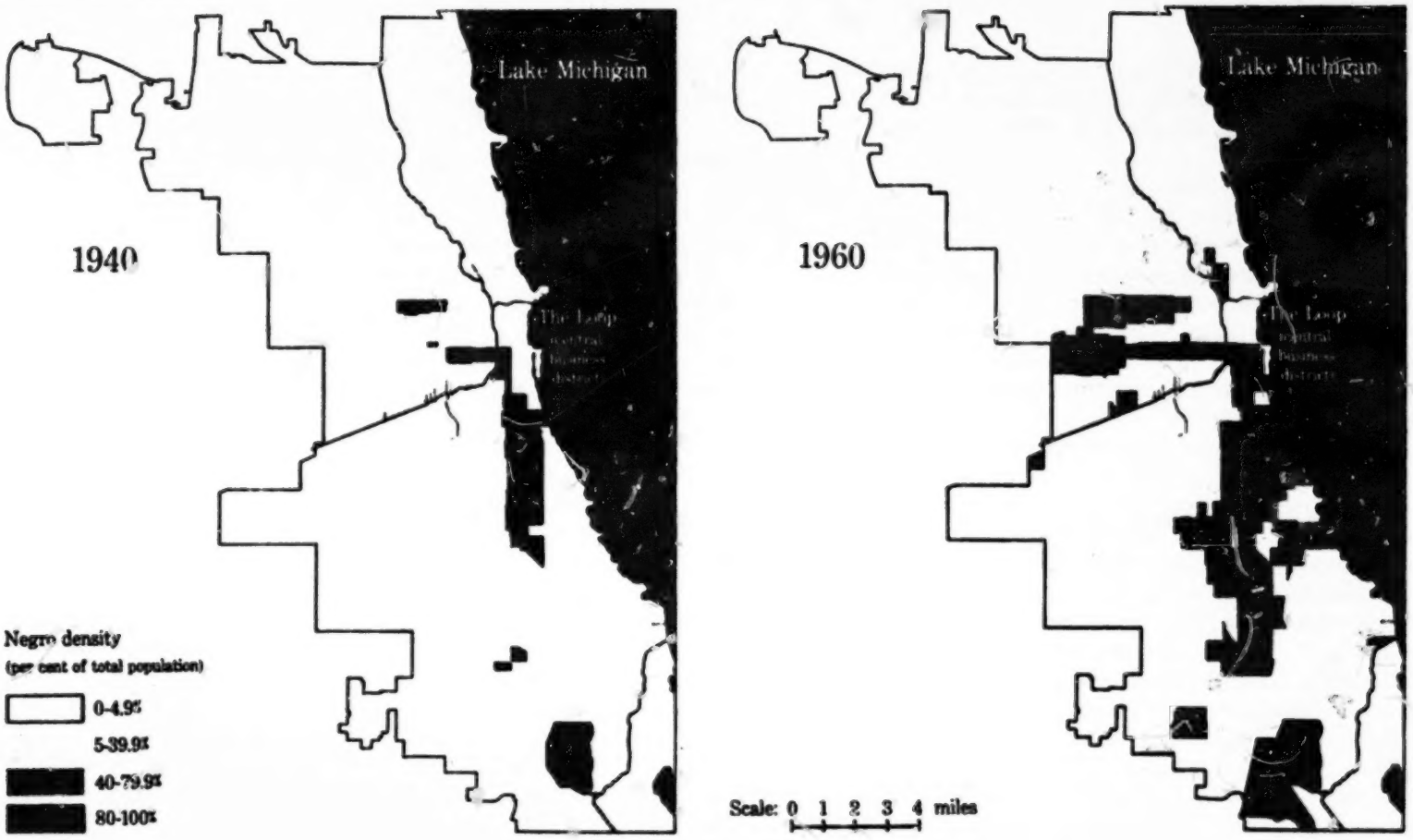
The crucial difference

Migration to the large city has always involved a heavy cost in family dislocation, pauperism, crime, delinquency, and urban blight. Immigrants bring with them housekeeping and other habits that clash with city standards; and the impersonality of city life tends to erode the social relationships that regulated behavior in "the old country." Hence the U.S. middle class has always had the sense of being engulfed by uncultivated newcomers, and has always been on the move. As early as the 1840's, for example, New York City's Fourth Ward—the district in which George Washington had lived when he was inaugurated President—had become a slum so overrun by violence that even the police dared not enter except in parties of six or more. And by the 1870's New Yorkers were already lamenting the exodus of men of "moderate income to the suburban towns." With its "middle classes in large part self-exiled, its laboring population being brutalized in the tenements, and its citizens of the highest class indifferent to the common weal," a journalist commented at the time, "New York has drifted from bad to worse and become the prey of professional thieves, ruffians, and political jugglers." Measured against the backdrop of history, therefore, the gangs and crime and squalor of today seem almost benign, and some historians

The Changing Face of Chicago

Chicago has the second-largest Negro population of any city in the U.S.—813,000 at the 1960 census count, or three times as many as it had in 1940. Negroes now represent about 23 per cent of the city's total population. The pattern of change in Chicago typifies that of most northern cities which have had a large Negro influx. In 1940, when Chicago had only 277,700 Negroes (8 per cent of total population), the great bulk lived in a long, narrow ghetto south of the Loop, the city's central business district. There were very few Negroes (i.e., fewer than 5 per cent) in 814 of the city's 935 census tracts. The sixty-six tracts that were 80 per cent or more Negro contained 86 per cent of the city's total Negro population. Chicago has remained a highly segregated city, despite the enormous increase in Negro population. Census tracts with 80 per cent or more Negroes now contain 80 per cent of the city's Negro population (tracts with 40 to 80 per cent Negroes hold another 12 per cent), while tracts with fewer than 5 per cent Negroes hold 89 per cent of the city's white population. But now there are 152 tracts that are 80 to 100 per cent Negro, compared to sixty-six in 1940.

The growth in Negro residence has occurred largely by expanding the old Negro ghetto into the adjoining areas rather than by settling new areas. (See right-hand map.) The expansion of the Negro ghetto has produced some improvement in the quality of Negro housing, however; conditions that white middle-class people call "blight" to Negroes represent a great improvement in housing standards.



and sociologists have concluded that time and patience are almost all that's needed.

It will take more than that. The Negro is unlike the European immigrant in one crucial respect: he is colored. And that makes all the difference. The Irish, to be sure, faced job discrimination a century ago as severe as the Negro faces today. But the Irishman could lose his brogue; as soon as he was "Americanized," his problem was resolved. But the Negro cannot escape so easily. "All other slum dwellers, when the bank account permits it," James Baldwin has written, "can move out of the slum and vanish altogether from the eye of persecution." Not so the Negro.

There are other differences. The European peasant, no matter how depressed his position, had roots in a "whole society" with a stable culture and stable institutions and above all a stable family life. The Negro does not. Slavery made a stable family life (and a stable culture) impossible. Husbands could be sold away from wives, children from parents. Such family life as did exist centered almost entirely around the mother.

What slavery began, prejudice and discrimination have helped perpetuate. Family disorganization is endemic. Negro women frequently find it easier to get jobs—e.g., as domestics—than Negro men, thus making them the financial center of the family. The inability of Negro men to find jobs that confer status and dignity, together with the servility required of them in the South, have led Negro men to sexual promiscuity, drinking, and violence as means of asserting their masculinity. Embittered by their experience with men, Negro mothers seem to take more interest in their daughters' than in their sons' upbringing. Twice as many Negro girls as boys go to college. (Among white college students, the reverse is true.) And family disorganization is compounded by the overcrowding and dilapidation of Negro housing.

Hence the Negro, all too often, is trapped in a vicious circle from which he cannot extricate himself. Little in the Negro boy's environment is likely to give him any sense of aspiration or any direction; he has no male model to follow and little reason to assume that education offers a way out of the slum. His lack of education and aspiration, in turn, makes it virtually impossible for the Negro youth to find a job with dignity and status, even where discrimination is absent. All too often, therefore, he decides that there is no point to trying, and he loses the capacity to take advantage of such opportunities as do arise. In the jargon of the social worker, he "develops a self-defeating mode of living" that keeps him trapped in the slum forever.

To make matters worse, the gap is widening between Negro education and training, on the one hand, and the requirements of the labor market, on the other. The Europeans immigrated during periods of rapidly expanding U.S. demand for unskilled labor; no great transfer of skill was needed to enable an Irish or Italian peasant to find a job on a construction gang. But in the U.S. today, the demand for unskilled labor is shrinking relative to the total labor force. Since 1947, employment of white-collar workers—executives, entrepreneurs, professional and scientific employees, clerks, and salesmen—has gone up 43 per cent, compared to only a 14 per cent gain in blue-collar and service-worker employment. By 1970 a substantial majority of workers will be in white-collar or highly skilled blue-collar jobs—in jobs that characteristically require real training and thought. Three out of

four nonfarm Negro male workers, however, are in unskilled or semiskilled occupations, compared to only one in three among white workers.

In this new world of specialized skills, Negroes have more and more trouble finding and holding jobs. The unemployment rate among Negro men is more than twice that among white men. In some cities as many as one Negro male in three is out of work. The problem is particularly acute among Negro youths; in one northern Negro slum area surveyed by Dr. James B. Conant, 70 per cent of the young men who had left school were out of work; in another the ratio was over 50 per cent.

The other side of Jordan

It would be a serious mistake to equate the Negro's apparent apathy and lack of motivation with a sense of contentment. It is a lot harder for today's Negro to bear his poverty and lack of status than it was for the European immigrant, who arrived at a time when the great majority of the population was poor. The Negro migration, by contrast, is occurring in an affluent society. Like the underdeveloped peoples everywhere, American Negroes have been fired by the revolution of rising expectations. In Harry Ashmore's phrase, Negroes have seen "the other side of Jordan"; they are in a hurry to cross. Among a good many Negroes, especially the college students involved in the sit-in movement, impatience with their rate of progress has conquered apathy and led to direct, disciplined, and frequently courageous action to improve the Negro position in American life. But among the great mass of working-class Negroes and a large part of the middle class, apathy exists side by side with a growing, festering resentment of their lot. These Negroes are more and more convinced that they should have a better life; they are less and less convinced that they themselves can do anything about it.

Impatience is greatest, perhaps, in the area of civil rights; the Supreme Court decision on school segregation raised expectations of a new era in race relations that has been painfully slow in coming. But Negroes are also impatient over their economic progress. During World War II and the early postwar boom, Negroes did make remarkable economic strides; the median income of urban Negro males shot up from less than 40 per cent of white income in 1939 to 60 per cent in 1952. Negroes have not been able to improve their relative position since 1952, however; the slowdown in the economy during the 1950's bore most heavily on the durable-goods industries, where many Negroes are employed. Thus the income of the average Negro male city dweller, which was 60 per cent of the average white income in 1952, had gone up only to 61 per cent by 1960. Outside the cities, average Negro income has actually declined since 1952.

As a result, impatience is turning into bitterness, anger, and hatred. The danger is not violence but something much deeper and harder to combat: a sense of permanent alienation from American society. Unless the Negro position improves very quickly, Negroes of whatever class may come to regard their separation from American society as permanent, and so consider themselves permanently outside the constraints and the allegiances of American society. The Negro district of every large city would come to constitute an American Casbah, with its own values and its own controls—and a deep hostility to the white community. In such a situation, communication between the races would become impossible. And life in the large city would become unbearable.

But the Negro advance depends on changes within the Negro community as well as within the white community. Understandably, Negroes have been reluctant to recognize this fact. They have assumed that an end to discriminatory practices will by itself solve the Negro problem. It will do nothing of the sort, although an end to discrimination certainly is a prerequisite to any solution. "If the color barrier could be eliminated overnight," Professor Eli Ginzberg of Columbia put the matter baldly in *The Negro Potential*, "that fact alone would not materially improve the position of the Negro."

The truth is that too many Negroes are unable—or unwilling—to compete in an integrated society. Because of the shortage of professional and technical personnel in industry and government, just about any qualified Negro can get a good job, but employers willing to hire Negroes have trouble finding Negroes to hire. Colleges and medical and professional schools eager to admit Negroes (and to give them scholarships) cannot find as many qualified Negroes as they are willing to admit; the National Scholarship and Service Fund for Negro Students reports that there are five times as many places available in northern colleges as there are Negroes to fill them. Nor have Negroes been taking advantage of the professional and business opportunities that the growth of the big-city Negro population has offered. The number of Negro physicians in the U.S. has been static for fifty years. As the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights sadly concluded, a principal reason for continued Negro poverty is "the lack of motivation on the part of many Negroes to improve their educational and occupational status."

The Negro community also lacks the sort of self-help institutions through which the European immigrants climbed out of their slums. Negroes, as Professor James Q. Wilson of Harvard put it in *Negro Politics*, are "the objects rather than the subjects of civic action. Things are often done for, or about, or to, or because of Negroes, but they are less frequently done *by* Negroes." There is no tradition of Negro philanthropy. Because the Negro has no indigenous culture to protect, the Negro community has not seen the same need to organize itself that European ethnic groups felt. The paucity of Negro self-help organizations may also be due to the tremendous growth of public assistance during the past quarter-century. The fact that help now comes from the city or state or federal government, sociologist Nathan Glazer suggests, has tended to channel "social energies" into the formulation of demands for new governmental programs rather than into the establishment and financing of voluntary organizations among Negroes.

The need for excellence

This institutional vacuum must be filled. For one thing, charitable and social-welfare programs organized, staffed, and supported by Negroes are likely to have a much greater impact on Negro behavior than programs administered by government or by private white agencies, both of which tend to be viewed with suspicion and hostility. Then, too, as Professor Ginzberg has been reminding Negro audiences, freedom is only the precondition for equality, not its equivalent. The more Negroes get what they want in terms of formal rights—voting, education, desegregation, etc.—the more responsibility they will have to assume for their own well-being.

This fact is now beginning to get its due. Perhaps the most important single factor making for solution of the Negro problem is the emergence of pride of race among Negroes. This new pride is the product of many factors: the Negro gains during World War II, the independence of the African nations, the courage and dignity shown by the sit-ins and Freedom Riders. Pride, to be sure, is always a two-edged

sword; among the Black Muslims it leads to hatred of everything white and to threats of anti-white violence. But overall, the new sense of pride is serving to raise the level of Negro aspirations and behavior; even the Black Muslims stress the importance of work, sobriety, chastity, and self-discipline.

A growing number of Negro leaders and spokesmen, moreover—particularly at the national level—are encouraging Negroes to assume more responsibility for their own fate. "All the intellectual arguments and sociological explanations in the world," the distinguished Negro journalist, Carl Rowan, now Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, has written, "do not meet fully the need to do something about the fact that people are being killed and maimed, street gangs are spreading terror in big cities, young girls are bearing an increasing number of illegitimate children, and dope and gin mills are flourishing in our urban centers." Negro leaders must recognize, Rowan argues—and in fact, they are beginning to recognize—"that it is not enough to blame every Negro misdeed on segregation, or to pretend that integration will be a cure-all for every social problem in sight."

Significantly, Rowan's view is shared by the man who has given the most dramatic leadership in the fight against segregation and who, more than any other leader, has captured the imagination of the Negro rank and file, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. "We have become so involved in trying to wipe out the institution of segregation, which certainly is a major cause of social problems among Negroes," Dr. King says, "that we have neglected to push programs to raise the moral and cultural climate in our Negro neighborhoods." Negroes, in Dr. King's view, must learn to strive for excellence in every field of endeavor—"not excellence as a Negro doctor or lawyer or a Negro craftsman, but excellence per se." He is urging his Southern Christian Leadership Conference to emphasize what he calls "the constructive program" of raising Negro standards as much as the program of "creative protest"—i.e., the sit-ins.

The National Urban League, moreover, is shifting its emphasis from opening up new job opportunities to preparing Negroes for the job opportunities that are opening up. "It's one thing to eliminate barriers," Dr. Whitney Young Jr., the league's dynamic new executive director, observes, "and quite another to get a previously depressed people to take advantage of the new opportunities." Dr. Young believes that Negro family life must be stabilized if Negroes are to be able to take advantage of these opportunities, and he's looking for funds to finance an ambitious new program in which the league would recruit a number of settled, well-adjusted middle-class Negro families to "adopt" a newly settled family and facilitate their adjustment to urban life.

"More powerful than apathy"

There is reason to think that Negroes, even those living in the worst sort of slum, can be mobilized to help themselves. In many ways the most impressive experiment affecting the Negro anywhere in the U.S. is going on now in Chicago's Woodlawn area, an oblong slum running south of the University of Chicago campus and containing about 100,000 people, almost all Negro. Woodlawn's physical decomposition is more than matched by its social disorganization. It is the principal port of entry for Negroes coming to Chicago from the South, and so has had a large transient population. It also contains a flourishing traffic in gambling, narcotics, and prostitution. Woodlawn, in short, is a social chaos of the sort that social workers have always assumed can never produce a large, active organization.

It's producing one now. The guiding genius is a highly controversial Chicago sociologist and criminologist, Dr. Saul D. Alinsky, executive director of the Industrial Areas Foundation. (No one else in the city of Chicago, as two Woodlawn ministers have written, "is as detested or as loved, as cursed or blessed, as feared or respected.") Alinsky was one of the principal architects of Chicago's much-admired Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, which has turned a white slum area that had been the locale for Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* into one of the most desirable working-class neighborhoods in Chicago. Alinsky was asked by three Protestant ministers and a Catholic priest to organize Woodlawn; the project is being financed by grants from the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, the Presbyterian Church, and a private philanthropy, the Schwartzhaupt Foundation.

If Alinsky succeeds, it will be the first time a large, broadly representative organization will have come into existence in any Negro district in any large American city. Alinsky is trying to create an organization that, as one local leader puts it, "will be the most powerful thing in Woodlawn—more powerful than the political party . . . more powerful than the apathy that holds the community in its grasp." He eschews the usual appeals to homeowners' interests in conserving property values or to a general neighborhood spirit or civic pride—appeals, in his view, that apply only to middle-class neighborhoods. Alinsky, instead, uses the classical approach of trade-union organization. He appeals to the self-interest of the local residents and to their resentment and distrust of the outside world, and he develops a local, indigenous leadership.

"They're paying attention"

The issue that is principally animating Woodlawn now is the University of Chicago's proposal to annex a strip a block wide and a mile long adjacent to the campus. The Negro residents have no particular attachment to the strip in question, but they suspect that its annexation will be the prelude to bulldozing a large part of the area for middle and upper-income apartment houses. There is ample basis for their fears; urban-renewal projects have been going on for some time under university sponsorship in the Hyde Park–Kenwood district north of the university, designed in good measure to clear Negroes out. To force the university and city-planning officials to bargain with the Woodlawn residents, Alinsky is mobilizing the residents into a group called the Temporary Woodlawn Organization; he had 8,000 Woodlawn people enrolled in the T.W.O. within six months of the project's inception. The T.W.O. organized an impressive campaign to get the usually apathetic Woodlawn residents registered and voting; during the registration period last August, a caravan of forty-six buses took some 2,300 members down to City Hall to register.

What makes the Woodlawn experiment significant, however, is not what it is doing *for* its members but what it is doing *to* them. "The most important thing to me about the forty-six busloads of people who went to City Hall to register," Alinsky says, "was their own reaction. Many were weeping; others were saying, 'They're paying attention to us.' 'They're recognizing that we're people.' " What is crucial, in short, is not what the Woodlawn residents win, but the fact that *they* are winning it. This fact seems to make the Woodlawn members see themselves in a new light, as people of substance and worth. While Alinsky's methods create a sense of militancy that could be misused, they create a sense of responsibility as well, and this is their most important product so far.

The twenty-point drop

The Negro problem is not just the responsibility of the Negro community, of course; its resolution requires drastically changed policies by a variety of governmental agencies. The social institution that touches the Negro problem most directly is the public school, which since the 1890's has been the principal means by which newcomers to the city, or their offspring, have been able to move out of the slums. The public school offers the greatest opportunity to dissolve the cultural barrier that blocks the Negro's advance into the mainstream of American life.

The opportunity is being muffed. Admittedly the problems encountered in the Negro (or for that matter, the white) slum school are enough to discourage the best-intentioned. Children entering school are ill-prepared, poorly motivated, and badly behaved; teachers must spend inordinate amounts of time maintaining order, and they are occasionally in danger of physical harm. Because families move from tenement to tenement with great frequency, pupil turnover is incredibly high—more than 100 per cent in some New York slum schools; the standard quip has it that if a teacher is absent a week, she won't recognize her class when she returns. Under these conditions one might reasonably expect that cities would spend more per Negro pupil than they do per white pupil. The reverse is generally true; the schools in Negro slum areas are the most overcrowded, are manned with the least-experienced teachers, and have the highest ratio of students to teachers.

The results are predictably poor. Coming from semiliterate or illiterate backgrounds, which not only offer no incentive to learn but rather frequently regard the school as a hostile force, many children never learn to read properly. Their inability to read at grade level in turn makes them fall behind in every other subject, even vocational courses; for example, shop students can't learn carpentry if they can't read blueprints or calculate fractions of an inch. The result is that their learning ability itself becomes atrophied; I.Q. typically drops twenty points as the Negro child progresses through school. By junior or senior high, it is almost impossible to reach him or teach him; three out of five Negro youngsters drop out of school before completion—uneducated, seemingly uneducable, and virtually unemployable. And yet these children can be educated; New York City and St. Louis, in particular, as we shall see, have demonstrated the fact beyond doubt.

The question first is, what kind of education can they—and should they—be given? Unfortunately, the current discussion is being shaped by Dr. James B. Conant's recent *Slums and Suburbs*, which has been accepted blandly and uncritically by almost everyone concerned with the problem, Negro or white. Dr. Conant has performed a great public service in calling attention to the dimensions of the problem and to the need for immediate action. But he has prescribed the worst possible remedy: a great expansion of vocational education for Negro youth.

If Conant's advice were followed, it would doom the Negro permanently to the bottom rung on the economic ladder. "A generation or two ago," as Professor Eli Ginzberg put it in *The Negro Potential*, "a man with negligible formal education could become a skilled worker. Today, participation in the industrial process requires of the worker not only basic literacy but a fairly high level of ability to deal with words and figures." The worker must be able to follow written instructions, to read the bulletin board, to keep various kinds of records, to master considerable technical knowledge. And he must be able to learn new skills, for nobody knows what job skills will be needed ten years from now.

What the Negro child needs, in short, is the same kind of education the white child needs and is beginning to get: an education that teaches him how to learn, that gives him the intellectual discipline and depth of understanding that will enable him to meet new conditions as they arise. But it will take more than a return to the three R's to give Negro children this kind of education. To penetrate the environmental and cultural curtain that keeps the Negro child from learning, the school must take on a whole range of functions that lie outside its normal sphere.

A success story

The most spectacular demonstration of what can be done to raise the aspirations and performance of Negro slum children is occurring in St. Louis, in the "Banneker group"—twenty-three elementary schools enrolling 16,000 children, 95 per cent of them Negroes living in the city's worst slum. Dr. Samuel Shepard Jr., the assistant superintendent in charge of the Banneker district, decided to take action four years ago, when the city's high schools instituted a three-track system of ability grouping. Only 7 per cent of the Banneker graduates were able to make the top ability track; nearly half were put in the bottom track. In three years Dr. Shepard has been able to triple the proportion of Banneker graduates admitted to the first track, from 7 per cent to 21 per cent, and to cut the number going into the bottom group to 21 per cent. Last June, in fact, Shepard's eighth-graders actually exceeded the national norm in reading; three years before the Banneker eighth-graders had been a full year behind.

The results largely reflect the impact of Shepard's powerful personality and dedicated leadership. He has changed teachers' and principals' attitudes toward their students from one of condescension to one of sympathy and challenge. More important, he has changed the Negro community's attitude toward the school. He keeps up a steady fire of meetings and of assemblies, field trips, pep talks, contests, and posters, designed to inculcate a respect for learning. For the children, he sets up a very competitive athletic-like atmosphere, in which the kudos goes to "the achievers." For the parents, Shepard uses an extremely blunt approach. He shows them by slides, charts, and film strips exactly how poorly their children are doing and warns them that unless the children do better in school they'll be no better off than their parents. He explains that things *can* be different for children, he shows in great detail the relation between education and employment, pointing to specific jobs now open to Negroes in St. Louis for which no qualified Negroes can be found. He also explains at length how the school operates at each grade, what the parents should demand of their children, and how they can help. And through all of this he emphasizes reading as the key to academic—and vocational—success.

Shepard has achieved these results without the use of extra resources; the greatest strength of his program is the fact that it depends on the ordinary classroom teacher. But remedial-reading teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists, and social workers can also be used to good effect, as New York City has shown with its Demonstration Guidance Project and its Higher Horizons program. In the first year of the Higher Horizons program the city was able to cut third-graders' retardation in reading from six months to only one month. Under grants from the Ford Foundation's Great Cities School Improvement Project, other cities are experimenting with a variety of techniques. Detroit and Philadelphia, for example, are employing "school-community agents" in slum schools to try to break down parental sus-

picion and hostility and persuade parents of the importance of education.

The programs now in operation, however, affect only a minute fraction of the children needing special help. What must be done is to put these programs into effect on a mass scale. To do so will cost money, of course. But the cities will get the money back—and a lot more besides—in lower relief costs, decreased juvenile delinquency and crime, and increased income for its residents—not to mention a radical improvement in the whole quality of city life. "A community which made its schools rather than its central business district the tender object and physical center of its urban-renewal operations," Paul Ylvisaker recently suggested, "would be taking one of the noblest and shrewdest steps forward in the civic progress of this century."

The underdeveloped country

The city, in short, must exercise "positive discrimination" in favor of the Negro if it is to enable the mass of Negroes to compete with whites on equal terms. The U.S. must learn to look upon the Negro community as if it were an underdeveloped country.

One thing that must be done—by industry and labor, as well as by government—is to develop long-range programs to educate workers who are already out of school, and whose lack of education makes them particularly vulnerable to technological unemployment. Armour's experience in trying to retrain workers made idle by automation has shown clearly that crash programs can provide only limited help. Of the 170 employees who applied for retraining when the company closed its Oklahoma City meat-packing plant, for example, 110 could not be given any training because they lacked the minimum skills in reading and mathematics. (See Labor, FORTUNE, July, 1961.)

There must also be a broadening of job opportunities for Negroes. There has been a significant reduction in job discrimination against Negroes in recent years, largely because of government prodding, but Negroes still find it very difficult to obtain jobs in the skilled trades, where union prejudice is a big stumbling block, and in clerical and sales jobs. It isn't enough for employers to make jobs formally available to Negroes; as a result of generations of discrimination, Negroes tend to assume that prejudice exists even where it has ended. A special effort must be made, therefore, to publicize the new job openings; Negroes must be brought within the web of job gossip through active recruitment.

Meanwhile, cities must try to alleviate some of the disorganization of Negro family and community life. The city has a vast panoply of services designed to prevent, relieve, and cure problems of individual and family behavior and circumstance. But each service deals separately with the individuals involved, sometimes in bureaucratic competition with the others. As often as not, the Negro—or the white slum dweller, for that matter—sees the bewildering array of police, school, and welfare agencies as enemies to be played off one against another.

It is possible to close the distance between the individual and government, and to coordinate the activities of the agencies affecting him. Wayne Thompson, the young city manager of Oakland, California, has pulled together seven public agencies representing four levels of government into something called the Associated Agencies. Fortnightly meetings of the A.A. workers in each section of the city are held to coordinate their work. In dealing with one school marked by frequent violence, for example, the school superintendent allowed the police to seal off the school area and then clean out the guns and knives in the school lockers. The school, police, recreation, probation, and welfare workers then culled a list of troublemakers, letting each agency take responsibility for the children it already knew, or upon whom it had some particular claim. Out of 2,800 pupils, only fifty-four turned out to be real troublemakers; when the whole job had been finished, only two had to be moved out of school and into detention. Since the Associated Agencies program started in late 1957, Oakland has been relatively free of trouble. The city recently received a $2-million grant from the Ford Foundation to extend the program.

New York City is trying to accomplish somewhat the same thing through its Neighborhood Conservation Projects. The coordination is not as complete, and the emphasis is fairly heavy on conservation of real estate rather than of human beings. But several projects have gone beyond physical rehabilitation—e.g., in the Bloomingdale district on Manhattan's West Side. The projects, in a sense, are designed to create a modern-day (but honest) counterpart to the old Tammany district leader, who served a very important function for the European immigrant, in effect locating him in the city and providing a channel to its government.

The housing dilemma

More must also be done about Negro housing. Despite a remarkable improvement in the condition of Negro housing since the end of World War II, nearly half of all the houses and apartments occupied by Negroes are still classified as "dilapidated" or "deteriorating" in the census rolls, compared to only 15 per cent of white homes. And Negroes live under far more crowded conditions. While good housing doesn't guarantee good behavior, bad housing does contribute to family disorganization and hence to delinquency.

The deterioration and overcrowding of Negro housing are due in good measure to the poverty of Negroes as a group. A study of the Philadelphia housing market by Chester Rapkin and William Grigsby of the University of Pennsylvania, for example, disclosed that only about 5 per cent of all Negro households had incomes sufficient to buy houses costing $12,000 or more—about the minimum price at which private builders were able to erect houses in that city. But discrimination as well as income robs the Negro of freedom of choice. Housing, as the U.S. Civil Rights Commission puts it, with only slight exaggeration, is "the one commodity in the American market which is not freely available on equal terms to everyone that can afford to pay."

Because economic and social factors bar Negroes from the market for new construction—and because Negro population is growing at an explosive rate in most large cities—Negroes are constantly looking for homes in the older, less expensive areas of the city. This pressure is as unsettling for the white community as it is for the Negro, for it leads to unstable and rapidly changing neighborhoods. To most white persons, as Eunice Grier of the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies puts it, "there is no such thing . . . as a stable and permanent integrated neighborhood." Hence, when Negro demand appears in a neighborhood, the community either resists Negro entry—sometimes with violence—or it abandons the neighborhood completely. The latter usually occurs in any case. As Negroes start moving in, the whites start moving out—some because of prejudice, others because they fear that if they remain they will rapidly become a minority. Integration, as Saul Alinsky sardonically observes, "is usually a term to describe the period of time that elapses between the appearance of the first Negro and the exit of the last white."

There is considerable evidence to suggest that whites *will*

live in integrated neighborhoods if they have some assurance that they will not be swamped. For that reason a number of housing experts now advocate the use of "benign quotas" as the best—or only—means of solving the Negro housing problem. New York City's Housing Authority, for example, is using a quota system to try to integrate its low and middle-income housing projects, with fair success.

But the benign quota is no panacea and will work only where there is some authority able to decide how many Negroes will be admitted, and to determine which Negroes will be admitted. The authority must be powerful enough to enforce compliance after the quota has been filled. Enforcing a quota, moreover, frequently involves a painful conflict between two laudable objectives—housing integration and an increased supply of housing for Negroes. In order to maintain the desired racial balance, a housing authority frequently has to turn down qualified Negroes in desperate need of housing in favor of whites whose need is far less acute.

It's doubtful, in short, whether any simple, dramatic approach can solve the Negro housing problem. So long as the great majority of Negroes have slum incomes, they are going to live in slums. In the long run, therefore, the only way to solve the problem of Negro housing is to solve the problem of Negro people—to raise the economic and social level of the Negro community.

The cost of delay

A new pride in self that is developing among Negroes is a powerful lever to raise Negro aspirations and achievements. The Negro's growing political activity is a powerful lever to force cities to face up to the problem; the Negro vote was decisive in last fall's mayoralty elections in Atlanta, Detroit, and New York.

And the U.S. economy itself should facilitate the Negro's advance during the 1960's. In a rapidly expanding economy employers will have to end job discrimination and upgrade unskilled and semiskilled Negro workers if they are to produce all their markets will demand. The training programs developed during World War II show what industry can do when the stakes are high enough. And with a shortage of skilled labor likely, unions will have far less incentive to restrict entry into the skilled occupations.

These trends will make solution of the Negro problem less difficult; but they will not solve it. If the Negroes are to take their proper place in U.S. society, millions of hard decisions will have to be taken by people of both races. And the longer the U.S. delays those decisions, the more painful this most urgent piece of public business will become. END